COVID-19 – Emergency Management Tips and Practices for Bus Transit Systems

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Emergency Management Tips and Practices for Transit

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, FDOT and CUTR recognize the need to provide transit agencies with guidance to help them effectively respond to this crisis. This document is a compilation of tips, strategies, and practices that other public transit across the country have implemented to help reduce the risk of being infected and/or spreading the COVID-19 virus. Additionally, it is pertinent to include mitigation strategies and updates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state and local emergency operations centers, and industry associations, such as the National Rural Transit Assistance Program (National RTAP), Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). Many of the actions and practices listed herein may help prevent the spread of the virus and may offer protections to people who are not infected. It is important to understand that this particular viral pandemic is relatively new to our country and response and practices are fluid in nature. As such, this document may be updated periodically as mitigation strategies, and Federal and state directives are issued. This document is not intended to be regulatory in nature and is only published and disseminated to offer suggestions based on what has been shared by Federal, state, and local governing bodies and the public transit industry. Additionally, care has been given to ensure the guidance given does not conflict with Federal or state laws, rules, regulations, or guidance issued by Federal or state agencies. Where applicable, links to resources and information are provided.

Transit agencies should continue to communicate and coordinate with their local emergency operations centers to obtain resources and make certain that updates, initiatives, and actions are following a unified command response. Also remember to report changes and updates to the respective FDOT district offices. This information is very important and FDOT Central Office shares this information with the State Emergency Operations Center to coordinate resources to local agencies.

It is helpful if transit agencies collect, maintain, and share all data related to emergency response activities. This information will be essential in developing best practices for our State going forward. Many of the tips, suggestions, and practices within this document may also be useful in assisting our extended transit family members, friends, and constituents in their efforts to combat this dangerous virus.

Mitigations on Public Transit Buses
Based on the information that has been disseminated by the CDC and other sources, the COVID-19 virus may be capable of living on hard surfaces for a period of time. The following are best practices agencies may use to reduce the risk of the virus spreading due to its presence on surfaces inside transit vehicles. In this section, agencies can obtain information relating to cleaning transit vehicles appropriately, examples of products used, and routine maintenance practices. Additionally, this section contains examples of what other transit agencies have done relating to limiting exposure to the virus.

- Keeping windows open, when possible
- Increasing ventilation by adjusting air conditioning
- Regularly disinfecting surfaces
- Disinfecting/sanitizing vehicles as often as every night – especially paratransit vehicles
- Utilizing 3rd party vendors to disinfect/sanitize vehicles (utilizing methods such as dry fog)
- Placing commercial hand sanitizer dispensers on vehicles. Place posters that encourage hand hygiene to help stop the spread at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
- Rear door boarding and alighting

- Staggering seating to limit capacity
- Limiting passengers to 10-15 per bus and 1-3 in paratransit vehicles
- Closing rows behind driver for spacing
- Limiting access to the bus operator area utilizing caution tape or other temporary barriers
- Using destination sign to provide specific instructions to passengers.

Example Mitigations on Public Transit Buses

Figure 1: Example destination sign for boarding and alighting
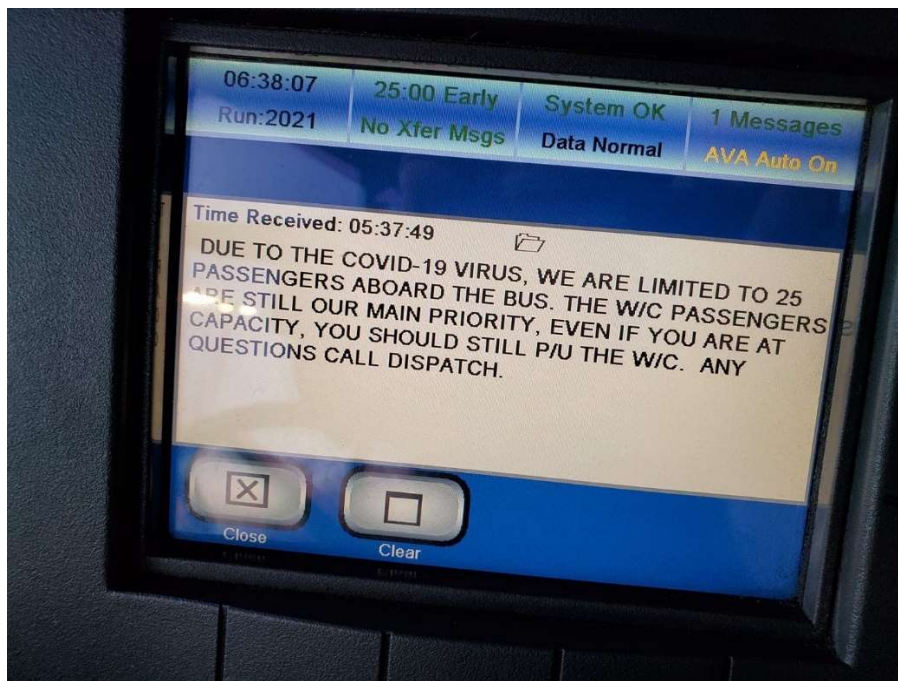
Figure 2: Sample message from mobile data terminal
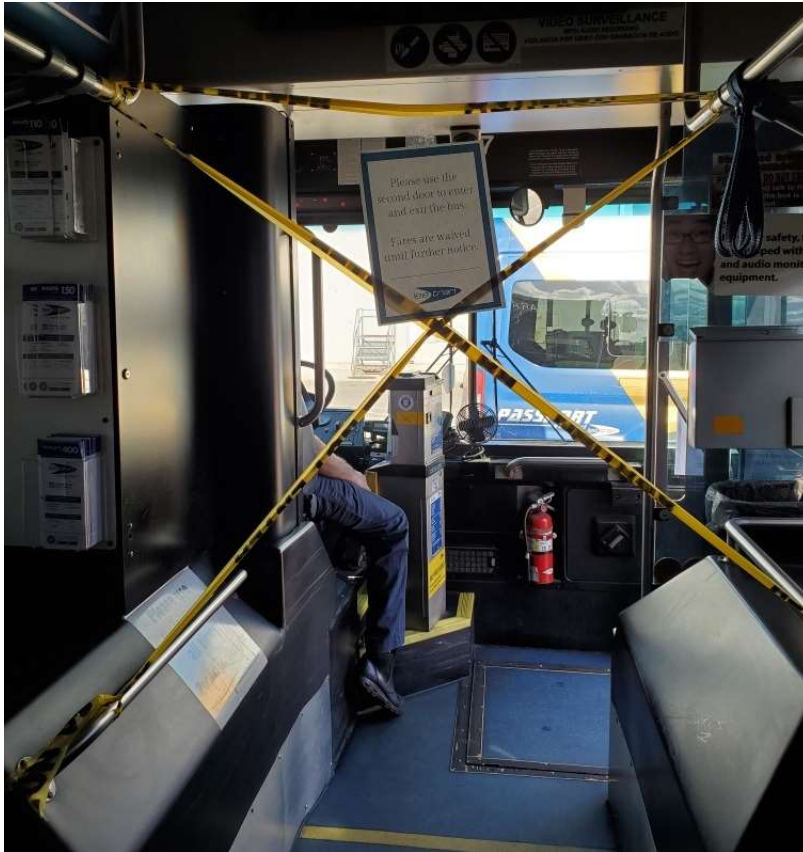
Figure 3: Agency notification about fare suspension and operator safety.

Figure 4: Closing rows behind driver for spacing
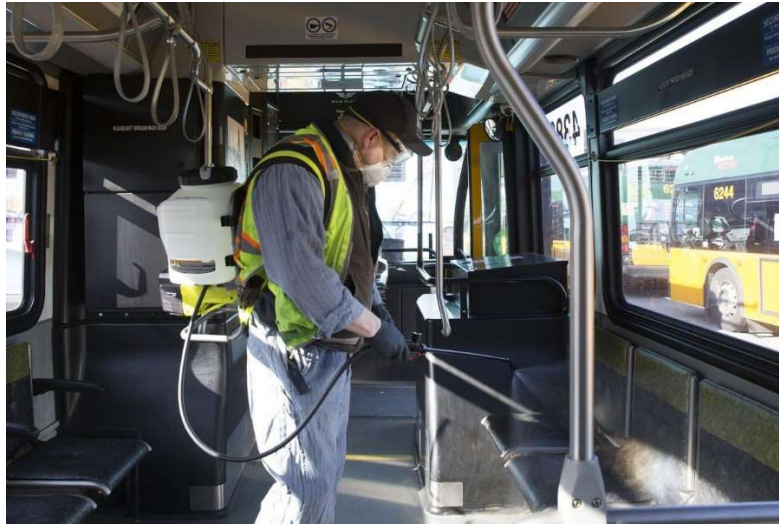
Figure 5: Spraying surfaces

Figure 6: Cleaning commonly touched surfaces

Mitigations for Public Transit Facilities

In this trying time, many agencies have begun to utilize their intelligent transportation solutions, mobile data terminals, electronic message boards, as well as other mitigation strategies at transit facilities to assist during this pandemic. In this section, you can obtain best practices, as well as information that is being communicated in transit terminals and facilities across the country to help mitigate the spread of the virus.

- Stop handshaking – use other noncontact methods of greeting
- Cleaning hands at the door and at regular intervals
- Disinfecting surfaces like doorknobs, tables, desks, and handrails regularly
- Increasing ventilation by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning
- Placing hand sanitizers in multiple locations to encourage hand hygiene
- Placing posters that encourage hand hygiene to help stop the spread at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen
- For disinfection most common Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered household disinfectants should be effective. A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available.
- Limit access to facilities to only those employees performing essential functions/duties
- Additionally, some transit agencies have closed their buildings to employees and the public, including in Olympia, WA and Charlotte, NC.

Figure 7: Limiting seating at transit stations.

Mitigations at Transit Fleet/Facility Maintenance

Many of the fleet and vehicle maintenance departments at transit systems nationwide are taking precautions to combat the spread of the COVID-19 virus. In this section, you can obtain pertinent information, as well as best practices relating to mitigations you can implement for facility and fleet maintenance.

- Increasing staff in order to thoroughly clean buses and facilities
- Enhancing cleaning equipment and supplies
- Increasing ventilation by opening windows and doors or adjusting air conditioning
- Clean and disinfecting all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, and common areas) focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces
- Cleaning dirty surfaces using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection
- Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible.
- Installing high-efficiency air filters
- Placing posters that encourage hand hygiene to help stop the spread at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen
- For disinfection most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available.

Example Mitigations at Transit Fleet/Facility Maintenance

Figure 8: Sanitizing high touch areas.

Figure 9: Cleaning the operator compartment

Public Transit Employees Working Remotely

Many transit agencies and other organizations and businesses have asked their employees to work from home until directed otherwise to help limit potential COVID-19 exposure. In this section you can review strategies that others are using, obtain examples of best practices relating to working remotely, and obtain information that may assist your agency with questions related to providing resources to personnel who are working remotely during the pandemic.

- Providing equipment for remote work (i.e. laptops, desktops, monitors, and docking stations)
- Teleconferencing capabilities
- Utilizing VPN and Remote Desktop Access
- Video conferencing capabilities – headsets and webcams
- Implementing temporary standard operating procedure (SOP) for employees working from home
- Identifying work hours while working remotely
- Considering internal human resource requirements, use of sick leave, annual leave, workers compensation, Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), etc.
- Using personal cell phones
- Providing temporary secure internet access
- Maintaining contact number or emails of essential employees
- Observing break time for remote workers
- Utilizing time sheets for Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requirements

Transit Service Modification Examples

Transit agencies across the country are experiencing both service reductions and other modifications. In this section, you can obtain best practices, ideas, and guidance related to transit service reductions, modification, and or temporary expansions as a direct result of the pandemic.

- Only providing trips to medical appointments
- Only providing in county trips
- Suspending service to tourist destinations and universities
- Saturday or Sunday service replacing weekday service

- Adding additional service to sites providing meals for children during school suspension
- Utilizing operators and vehicles that may be available due to other modifications in service to perform other transit task
- Reducing service on routes with multiple blocks to make resources available for other purposes or route expansions due to the event
- Temporarily adjusting revenue overall service time/hours to emulate the local changes
- Reducing non-ADA paratransit services to medical, medical related, and grocery trips

Transit Fare Adjustments

Transit agencies across the country are modifying or waiving fares for transit riders. In this section, you can find examples of what other transit agencies are doing relating to transit fares. Additionally, you can review any success stories or challenges associated with altering transit fare policies.

- Suspending fares
- Promoting tap and pay where available
- Some agencies are also removing fare enforcement for the same reason since the fare machines are typically only at the front door. Most seem to be eliminating payments that require more than a tap on the farebox.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment

Transit workers as well as other workers are utilizing personal protective equipment (PPE) while at work. In this section, you will find information on the use of PPE from the CDC, as well as best practices and examples from other transit agencies across the US who are using and/or providing PPE to their workers.

- CDC guidance on utilizing PPE
- Operators and maintenance technicians wearing masks and gloves
- Issuing N95 respirator masks
- Driver barriers
- Providing workers with up-to-date education and training on COVID-19 risk factors and protective behaviors (e.g., cough etiquette and care of PPE).
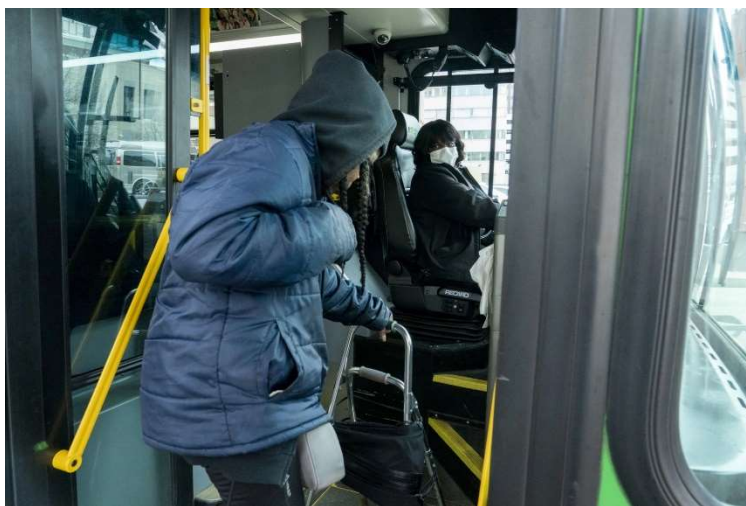
Figure 10: Operator in face mask

Preliminary Screening of Employee and Patrons

Some transit agencies across the US have begun the preliminary screening of employees and patrons of transit services. In this section you can obtain information relating to this effort, review examples of what methods other agencies are using, as well as other useful information relating to this mitigation strategy.

- Supervisors and dispatchers taking employees temperature when reporting for work
- Encouraging employees to stay home if sick or if family members are sick at home
- Employees who have symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should notify their supervisor and stay home.
- Sick employees should follow CDC-recommended steps. Employees should not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.
- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and follow CDC recommended precautions.

Social Distancing

Social distancing is a strategy implemented across the US. Social distancing means avoiding large gatherings (currently defined as 10 or more people) and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible (e.g., breakrooms and cafeterias). (Please monitor your local and county government agencies for updated guidance, restrictions, or orders). This section contains best practices, innovative ideas, as well as temporary measures that transit agencies across the country have made in an attempt to limit COVID-19 exposure through social distancing.

- Some transit agencies are utilizing spare buses that have become available from canceled trips to supplement route/ blocks to allow enhanced social distancing
- Rear door boarding and alighting
- Staggered seating to limit capacity
- Limiting passengers to 10-15 per bus, paratransit vehicles limited to 1-3 passengers
- Operator shields on buses
- Implementing flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts)
- Increasing physical space between employees and customers (e.g., drive through, partitions)
- Implementing flexible meeting and travel options (e.g., postpone non-essential meetings or events)

Example Social Distancing

Figure 11: Sign to limit seating availability.

Utilizing Social Media

Social media is an effective tool to disseminate pertinent information on many topics. During this pandemic, transit agencies are using social media to expand information dissemination including timely updates of transit service modifications and/or restrictions, and any other precautionary measures the agency is taking to limit exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Additionally, social media can assist transit agencies and community members by providing a platform for updates related service changes and safety mitigations implemented by the agency. In this section, agencies can obtain best practices, innovative ideas, as well as examples of utilizing social media to its potential during this pandemic.

- Plan ways to incorporate popular or topical social media platforms that can help you promote key messages and quickly update people with new information. Social media platforms also provide direct access to your target audiences, giving you opportunities to engage in real-time discussions for information gathering and evaluation purposes.
- Use best practices and principles of effective risk communication; you may want to localize and redistribute CDC messaging on social media.
- Social media updates can include temporary safety measures the transit agency has implemented due to the pandemic
- Social media is also a mechanism for employees and the public to comment on any changes that an agency is making. Agencies may consider some of these suggestions to enhance what they are already doing or implement a change based on someone's idea.

Example Social Media Posts
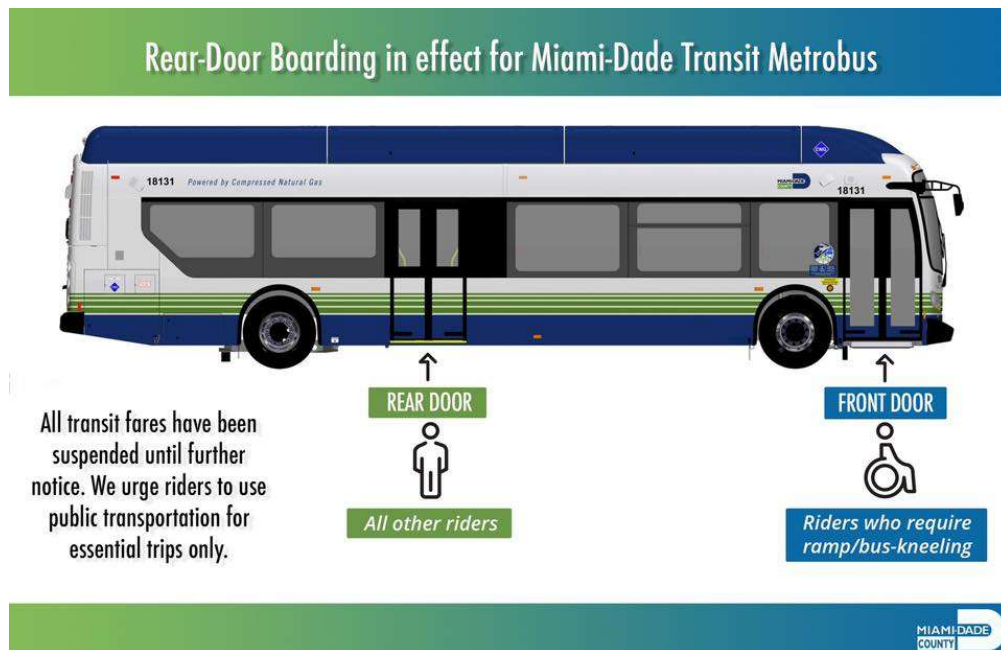
Figure 12: Notification to riders about fares and boarding processes.
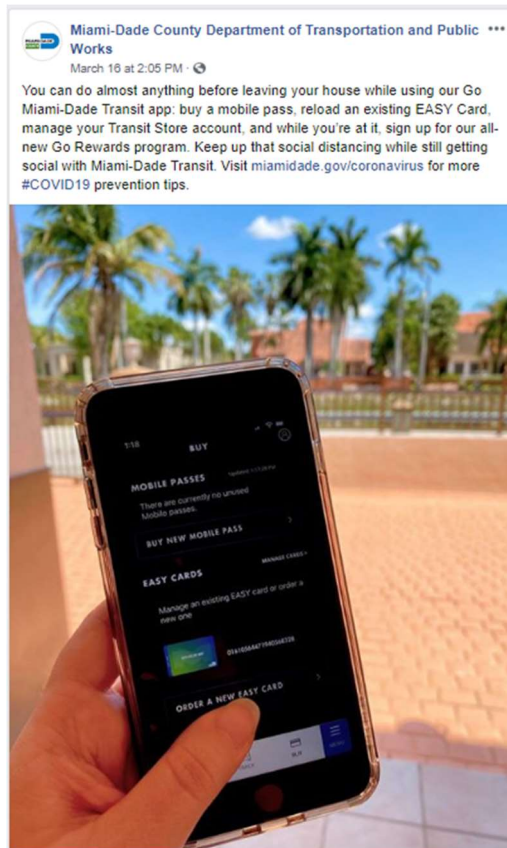
Figure 13: Facebook post to use mobile fare payment.

Figure 14: Image posted to Facebook about staggered seating to maintain distance.

Center for Disease Control (CDC) Guidance

CDC is responsible for controlling the introduction and spread of infectious diseases, and provides consultation and assistance to other nations and international agencies to assist in improving their disease prevention and control, environmental health, and health promotion activities

The Center for Disease Control is the department that provides up to date accurate information relating to the COVID-19 virus. In this section, agencies can find links to resources and pertinent up to date information relating to the pandemic.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

Symptoms of Coronavirus: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html

Figure 15: CDC Handwashing Guidelines

State of Florida Proclamations

A state proclamation is an official declaration issued by a person of authority to make certain announcements known. The State of Florida has issued proclamations relating to the COVID- 19 pandemic. In this section you can find links to the State proclamations, essential updates relating to the statewide pandemic as well as other pertinent resources.

- Florida Health: https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/
- State of Florida Executive Orders: https://www.flgov.com/2020-executive-orders/
- State of Florida Executive Order Stay at Home: https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO_20-91-compressed.pdf

For specific questions, Florida's COVID-19 Call Center is available 24/7 at 1-866-779-6121 or you may reach them at COVID-19@flhealth.gov

Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans (PTASP)

Requests for temporary relief from PTASP and other FTA requirements during this National Emergency should be submitted to the FTA's 2020 Emergency Relief Docket.

Please contact PTASP-TAC@dot.gov if you have further questions or concerns regarding the PTASP regulation.

Other Resource Sites

Florida-Specific Coronavirus Conference Call: On March 17, 2020 a conference call was held between transit agencies and FDOT representatives. The linked pdf includes a Q&A summary as well as a link to the recording of the call. https://floridatransit.org/wp-content/uploads/QA-from-031720CV_FDOT_answers.pdf

FPTA Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information: https://floridatransit.org/coronavirus

ADA National Network: Emergency Preparedness Resources: https://adata.org/emergency-preparedness

Answers Based on APTA Members' Coronavirus Questions: https://www.apta.com/home/answers-based-on-apta-members-coronavirus-questions/

CTAA Best Practice: Advanced Preparations for Employee Health and Safety: https://ctaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Advance_Prep.pdf

CTAA Best Practice: Communicating Service Reductions: https://ctaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Service_Reduction.pdf

CTAA Best Practice: Properly Cleaning Your Vehicles and Other Transit Facilities: https://ctaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Cleaning_Vehicle.pdf

CTAA Best Practice: What To Do if Your Employee Tests Positive: https://ctaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/What_To_Do.pdf

CTAA Best Practice: Working with Your Local Health Departments: https://ctaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/local-health-de_45266188.pdf

CTAA COVID-19 Resources and News https://ctaa.org/covid-19-resources/

DOT Guidance on Compliance with Drug and Alcohol Testing Regulations https://www.transportation.gov/odapc/compliance-with-dot-drug-and-alcohol-testing-regulations

Easterseals: Coronavirus: Staying Healthy Together: https://www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/living-with-disability/coronavirus.html

FTA Emergency Relief Program: https://www.transit.dot.gov/about/news/us-department-transportation-announces-increased-flexibility-help-transit-agencies

FTA Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): https://www.transit.dot.gov/coronavirus

Government Response to Coronavirus, COVID-19: https://www.usa.gov/coronavirus

National RTAP: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Information and Resources for Transit https://nationalrtap.org/Resource-Center/Advanced-Search/fid/1082

NCHRP Report 769: A Guide for Public Transportation Pandemic Planning and Response: http://www.trb.org/Publications/Blurbs/170529.aspx

OSHA: Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19: https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf

Video Resources

CDC: Symptoms of Coronavirus 2019: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGruT7Fd54E

CDC: What You Need to Know About Handwashing:
https://www.cdc.gov/cdctv/healthyliving/hygiene/what-you-need-know-about-handwashing.html

Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) Cleaning Procedures: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sDJAm-rvhs

Minneapolis-Saint Paul (Metro Transit) Metro Transit is working with health officials to ensure safety for customers and employees: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXI8CmMJToE

WPLG Local 10: Miami-Dade increases cleaning efforts on public transportation:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_YB5WJufsI

Appendix A: Assessment Tools and Checklists from NCHRP Report 769: A Guide for Public Transportation Pandemic Planning and Response

Sample Pandemic Activation Matrix

Purpose: Provide a sample activation matrix for a pandemic plan/annex.

Directions: Customize the chart to an organization and include as the activation matrix in a pandemic plan/annex.

Transit system managers may use this matrix to help organize their thinking and decision making when confronting a possible pandemic.

	STANDBY/Alert/ Monitoring	MINOR IMPACT	MODERATE IMPACT	MAJOR IMPACT
Describe the impact in general terms	Outbreak of a pandemic, or potentially, pandemic, disease somewhere in the world	Current outbreak in another state or contiguous country	Current outbreak locally with notable changes in absenteeism and ridership	Significant impact locally with challenges to providing services
Describe the local impact in detail	Situation requires monitoring	The illness has not yet, but is reasonably expected to, impact community	Conditions or activities exceed normal resource utilization for response or capabilities/capacities diminished but can be carried out within the confines and capabilities of the organization with some modifications	Response requires a community/regional response to save lives and maintain continuity of operations
Need to activate emergency operations plan?	Maybe	Yes, partially	Yes	Yes
Need to activate incident management team?	Maybe	Yes, partially	Yes	Yes
Need to activate command center?	Maybe	Yes, partially	Yes	Yes
Need to communicate with local EOC?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Need to communicate with employees and the public?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
What non-pharmaceutical measures to prevent the spread of disease?			Case containment Social distancing Infection control	Case containment Social distancing Infection control

Pandemic Vulnerability Assessment Tool

Purpose: Assist transportation organizations in identifying vulnerability to a pandemic. Vulnerabilities are most present for a pandemic when the organization is not prepared. As a result, this tool focuses on level of preparedness.

Directions: Use this assessment to facilitate an internal discussion about where the organization's vulnerabilities are and how to best address them with limited time and budgetary resources.

ACTIONS	NOT STARTED	% IN PROGRESS	COMPLETED	N/A
Obtain real, demonstrable, substantive, long-term executive support for pandemic preparedness.				
Participate regularly in local emergency planning committee (if functioning) and other local forums.				
Establish relationship with local public health department.				
Familiarize management with local and state public health powers.				
Understand how a pandemic will likely impact the organization.				
Conduct comprehensive planning and develop realistic and useful emergency management plans and emergency operations plans.				
Plan for the impact of a pandemic on employees and customers.				
Establish policies to be implemented during a pandemic.				
Allocate resources to protect employees and customers during a pandemic.				
Develop a continuity of operations plan that addresses issues such as order of succession and command structure.				
Work with public health and emergency management to ensure that transportation personnel are considered "essential services" where they, and their family, may receive priority for limited resources such as vaccines.				
Determine staff training needs based on their expected job functions.				
Train on the ICS and NIMS.				
Obtain appropriate PPE and other supplies.				
Ensure preventative maintenance program is in place for PPE and other supplies.				
Train on the PPE.				
Develop internal protocols (e.g., PPE, structure and vehicle disinfectant).				
Obtain EPA-approved disinfectant.				
Exercise regularly both internally and within the community.				
Evaluate the effectiveness of the transit organization's emergency management program on a regular basis.				
Promote and support emergency planning and preparation for personnel families.				

Decision Making and Partnership Planning Tool

Purpose: Assist transportation organizations in breaking down specific planning issues within the context of an ICS type response. This checklist is designed to provide a starting point and is not exhaustive of all possible actions.

Directions: Use this planning tool to determine how specific planning issues translate to a response using the ICS. Note that this tool is organized by function and that one person can be assigned more than one function.

ACTIONS	NOT STARTED	% IN PROGRESS	COMPLETED	N/A
COMMAND				
Have the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of the incident commander and command staff been identified and documented?				
Has a crosswalk been developed to identify who may fulfill different functions (including those who are cross-trained)?				
Has the safety officer been authorized in writing to modify or terminate any activity they consider to be unsafe?				
Has the organization established relationships with external agencies that they will likely need to liaise with during an emergency?				
Have the persons that may be tasked with public information been trained and exercised on their function?				
Has the organization identified persons that may serve as technical specialists?				
Has an EOC or DOC been identified, equipped, and readied for activation?				
Have the allied organizations been identified and contact list including key information been developed?				
Has organization participated in forums with emergency management, public health, and transportation organizations regarding emergency management?				
Has organization established a DOC, transportation multi-agency coordination center (MACC) or equivalent if appropriate?				
Has organization developed and validated memorandum of agreement or memorandum of understanding, mutual aid agreements, service agreements?				
Has leadership made a commitment and statement of executive support?				
Identify the order of succession for decision-making roles.				
Identify decisions that can only be made by an outside governance board during a disaster.				
Leadership has been trained and exercised in ICS/NIMS.				

ACTIONS	NOT STARTED	% IN PROGRESS	COMPLETED	N/A
PLANNING				
Have criteria been established for activation of the plan and opening of the EOC/DOC?				
Is planning capable of conducting effective situation information collection and analysis?				
Can planning generate an appropriate and effective incident/event action plan?				
Can planning track attainment of objectives, strategies, and tactics throughout an operational period?				
OPERATIONS				
Have branches, divisions, groups, and units been identified for use by the transit system?				
Has staff been trained on expected job functions?				
Can operations develop effective tactics to carry out objectives and strategies in coordination with planning?				
Can operations clearly articulate resource needs to logistics to carry out assigned tactics?				
Are different procedures or protocols required during emergencies for staff to use?				
LOGISTICS				
Has logistics identified and developed agreements with external resources (i.e., services and equipment)?				
Can logistics track the status of personnel and equipment?				
Can logistics provide needed employee well-being services and family care?				
Has logistics developed a draft communications plan for use during an emergency?				
FINANCE				
What additional personnel costs will be associated with implementing this policy?				
What additional supply/equipment costs will be associated with implementing this policy?				
Will tracking personnel time require additional steps?				
How vulnerable is the organization to claims from how this policy is implemented?				
Identify how payroll and other crucial financial services can operate when impacted with a high level of absenteeism.				
Determine how decreased services for an extended time will impact revenue collection and financial capacity.				

Preventing the Spread of Disease Checklist

Purpose: Provide a checklist of disease prevention actions transportation agencies should address during the planning phase for pandemics. This checklist is designed to provide a starting point and is not exhaustive of all possible actions.

Directions: Use the chart below to plot progress.

ACTIONS	NOT STARTED	% IN PROGRESS	COMPLETED	N/A
CLEANING AND DISINFECTION OF TRANSPORTATION ASSETS				
Has organization established how transit stations will be cleaned and disinfected during a pandemic?				
Has organization established how transit and other vehicles will be cleaned and disinfected during a pandemic?				
Has organization established how passenger vehicles will be cleaned and disinfected during a pandemic?				
Has organization established how other transportation assets (e.g., customer service centers, public sites, offices, dispatch centers, maintenance facilities) will be cleaned and disinfected during a pandemic?				
VACCINES				
Have front line transportation workers been included in local plans for vaccinating key personnel (e.g., in line behind public safety, nurses, and doctors)?				
CASE CONTAINMENT MEASURES				
Will employees be screened upon arrival at work for symptoms (e.g., fever, etc.) and sent home or for medical care if they appear ill?				
Has the organization determined how to ensure that sick employees are staying home in order to stop the spread of the disease?				
How will employees who become sick during a shift be sent home and replaced if appropriate?				
SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES				
Will social distancing practices be established in the work areas that do not include interface with riders (e.g., maintenance facilities, offices)?				
Will social distancing practices be established in areas where riders are present (e.g., vehicles, bus stops, stations, customer service centers)?				
Are there methods established to encourage/enforce social distancing?				
INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL MEASURES				
Is staff interacting with the public expected to wear personal protective equipment?				
If so, is the PPE available and maintained?				
Are there reliable means to replace personal protective equipment when expended?				

ACTIONS	NOT STARTED	% IN PROGRESS	COMPLETED	N/A
Is staff trained and exercised in use of PPE to establish and maintain competency?				
Is staff trained in identifying PPE donning, inspection, failure, doffing, and signs and symptoms of physical and mental stress while using PPE?				
If using respiratory equipment, is staff provided medical clearance from a licensed health professional?				
Is staff that use respiratory protection enrolled in a respiratory protection program pursuant to applicable OSHA standards?				
Is aggressive hand washing using soap/water and non-water hand sanitizers for staff and riders a part of the infection prevention program?				
Are opportunities for hand washing available, convenient, and maintained?				
Has a cleaning schedule for the component parts of the transit system (e.g., vehicles, stations, industrial work areas, office work areas) been established?				
Have EPA-approved disinfectants been acquired or can they be quickly and reliably accessed?				
Are there protocols, and has staff been trained and equipped, for conducting cleaning where chemicals are used or aerosols generated (e.g., steam cleaning)?				
How will transportation vehicles (e.g., bus and rideshare) follow public health orders for social distancing (e.g., limiting number of passengers per vehicle, only every third seat occupied, no standing riders)?				
Will passengers with disease symptoms be allowed to board transportation vehicles?				
How can drivers and other passengers operate with minimal physical interaction?				
How will the organization address employees' emotional stress based on fear of infection, illness, and possible death?				
Are family emergency plans for staff in place?				
Are transportation organization personnel identified as "essential services"?				

Providing Services During a Pandemic Checklist

Purpose: Provide a checklist of service-related issues transportation agencies should address during the planning phase for pandemics. This checklist is designed to provide a starting point and is not exhaustive of all possible actions.

Directions: Use the chart below to plot progress.

ACTIONS	NOT STARTED	% IN PROGRESS	COMPLETED	N/A
IDENTIFYING ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS				
Compile organizational functions.				
Determine criteria for selecting essential functions.				
Identify essential functions (e.g., payroll, bus service, etc.) and areas of responsibility.				
Identify supporting processes and systems for each essential function.				
Identify key management, technical, and supporting personnel.				
Prioritize essential functions.				
Define which functions are essential.				
SERVICE CHANGES				
Identify how an impact to basic local services (e.g., trash pickup, street-cleaning, etc.) may impact ability to provide transportation services.				
Identify alternate fuel and spare parts vendors, including executing agreements that have been validated.				
Identify alternate staffing configurations (e.g., retired workers).				
Actively involve labor organizations in planning process, if represented.				
Define which services are essential and which can be suspended temporarily.				
Identify what level of absenteeism could be tolerated from each service area before capabilities or capacity must be altered.				
Identify how some business operations (if any) could shift to having work performed from home with little warning?				
Identify which transportation lines and/or routes can be altered temporarily.				
Identify alternative means of servicing essential and peripheral routes.				
Identify ACS and POD to address destinations generated by the response to the disease outbreak.				
DEMAND				
What services could find their demand decrease during a pandemic and why?				
What services could find their demand increase during a pandemic and why?				
REVENUE				
How would a reduction in service demand impact revenue?				
How would an increase in service demand impact revenue?				
Would the impact on revenue be significant enough to impact the organization's ability to continue paying employees or vendors?				
What are the indirect and direct costs to a reduced need for services?				
What are the indirect and direct costs to an increased need for services?				

ACTIONS	NOT STARTED	% IN PROGRESS	COMPLETED	N/A
PASSENGERS WITH ACCESS AND FUNCTIONAL NEEDS				
How does the organization define passengers with access and functional needs?				
How will passengers with access and functional needs (e.g., wheelchair, assistance, etc.) be impacted by services that see an overall decrease or reduction?				
Will an increase in an overall need for services increase the number of passengers with access and functional needs?				
DENY SERVICE				
If denying services, how will organization present alternative means for individuals to travel (e.g., ambulance, taxi, dedicated vehicles on routes or on-demand, etc.)?				
Denying services may be controversial and will require clear and consistent use of protocols. How will these protocols be developed upon receipt of public health directives?				
PERSONAL PROTECTION				
Surgical masks are a means to minimize the spread of airborne or droplet particles from an ill person sneezing or coughing, but does not protect against becoming infected. Under what circumstances will the transportation authority provide passengers (all or those with symptoms) with masks, request/require use during ride and prepare to dispose of them properly?				
Is the infrastructure in place to fit test and train workers on use of N95s? Note that N95 respirators or equivalents (e.g., P100, APR/PAPR with HEPA filter) provide a higher level of protection from infection but need to be fit tested (except for a PAPR) and the worker enrolled in a Respiratory Protection Program pursuant to the applicable OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.134 or equivalent).				
How will management accommodate workers wearing N95 respirators since work capacity diminishes when using respiratory protection for an extended period of time? Is there a plan for communicating with the public regarding the issuance of masks to transportation employees?				
Under what circumstances will hand sanitizer dispensers be installed at the entrance of each vehicle and drivers trained to either strongly encourage or mandate usage prior to boarding? Note: Alcohol based hand cleaners increase fire hazards and some diseases (e.g., C. diff) are resistant to alcohol.				

Workforce Checklist

Purpose: Provide a checklist of workforce-related actions transportation agencies should address during the planning phase for pandemics. This checklist is designed to provide a starting point and is not exhaustive of all possible actions.

Directions: Use the chart below to plot progress.

ACTIONS	NOT STARTED	% IN PROGRESS	COMPLETED	N/A
ESSENTIAL WORKERS				
Has the organization identified essential functions as part of their continuity of operations plan?				
Has the organization identified essential workers?				
AUXILIARY WORKFORCE				
Is an auxiliary workforce in place that can assume particular roles in helping to sustain essential functions and is it consistent with labor agreements (e.g., contractors, part-time employees)?				
STAFFING PATTERNS				
What is the changed nature of transit operations and what are the staffing needs to support those changes?				
LABOR RELATIONS				
How have the workforce representatives been engaged in the pandemic planning process so that worker rights, safety, and status are protected while meeting the organizational needs during extraordinary events?				
EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION				
Will employees be able to access workers' compensation if they become ill and believe they were exposed while working?				
Has payroll been deemed an essential function with backup personnel in place to ensure employee wage payments are made regularly to ensure that employees are able to maintain normal domestic financial arrangements?				
Has direct deposit been made available so that ill workers do not need to be physically present to receive payment?				
HEALTH INSURANCE				
Are the applicable insurance programs provided by the organization clearly understood and communicated in the context of a pandemic or public health emergency?				
How will the case of a worker who contracts a pandemic disease that exists in the community be addressed in terms of a "work related illness?"				
Will a worker who contracts a pandemic disease that exists in the community be presumed to have a work related illness?				
Does the organization pay for or encourage annual flu vaccination?				
LEAVE				
Is there a phased approach to the management of employee leave entitlements (e.g., employees use existing arrangements such as paid sick time, then are granted time without pay, etc.)?				

	In the event of employees being directed not to attend work due to illness will they still receive their normal salary and wages?				

ACTIONS	NOT STARTED	% IN	COMPLETED	N/A
MENTAL HEALTH				
Will the organization be providing timely and accurate communication to employees, including those who are sick, during the pandemic to reduce stress?				
Will the organization provide opportunities for support, counseling, and mental health assessment and referral should these be necessary?				
Does the organization have an employee assistance program that can provide guidance and resources on mental health and resiliency?				
Does the organization have a system in place for monitoring worker and worker family social and psychological concerns?				
UNION RELATIONS				
Review and revisit labor agreements (for union environments); what can be required?				
Would there be wage/hourly pay considerations for hazardous conditions?				
WORKFORCE RE-ENTRY				
How/when will employees be allowed to return to work after absence due to infectious disease?				
Does the organization have a system to track those individuals who have had the disease and are now immune?				
What parameters will be set to define "wellness" (e.g., no current temperature, 24 hours without a temperature, incubation period, limited interaction with infected individuals, etc.)?				
How will employees deal with readjusting to the workplace after the possible loss of close family members, friends, and colleagues?				
Will there be a mandatory leave period for those who have lost a family member?				
FAMILY CARE REQUIREMENTS				
How many workers have school-age children or other dependents at home that could be impacted by school closures?				
How many workers have school-age children or other dependents at home that could be impacted by child and adult daycare closures?				
How many workers are dual-income, working parents or single, and head of household parents?				
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION				
How many workers rely solely on public transportation to get to and from work?				
COMMUNICATION				
What are the best methods for sharing home protection measures with workers and their families?				
What systems are in place to communicate information to employees about status, changes in schedules, recommendations, etc.?				

Public and Media Relations Checklist

Purpose: Provide a checklist of public information actions transportation agencies should address during the planning phase for pandemics. This checklist is designed to provide a starting point and is not exhaustive of all possible actions.

Directions: Use the chart below to plot progress.

ACTIONS	NOT STARTED	% IN PROGRESS	COMPLETED	N/A
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICERS				
Has the organization identified public information personnel [or point of contact (POC) or responsible agency]?				
Have members of the public information staff been trained and exercised in their expected job functions?				
Have those responsible for public information at the transit organization been in touch with local emergency management and public health?				
Have those responsible for public information at the transit organization reached out to other public information personnel?				
Have the public information personnel developed pre-scripted messages and identified places for media conferences, interview, and photo locations?				
Have public information personnel reached out to local media?				
Have public information personnel developed an internal information plan?				
Have alternate methods of communication dissemination been explored and developed, including social media?				
Is there a plan for public and media inquiries to be managed?				
Has a rapid response capability been developed?				
Have public information personnel participated in JIC training?				
Has the ability to expand public information staffing to meet anticipated need been addressed?				
Have pre-scripted messages and other templates been developed that can be adapted quickly during an emergency?				
AUDIENCES AND MESSAGES				
Identify demographics of riders that traditionally do not use transit services that may join ridership during an outbreak.				
Determine how regular passengers are most likely to receive updates regarding changes to transportation services during a disaster (e.g., text, television news, etc.).				
Craft and test messages and means of dissemination of public information.				
Have means to communicate with difficult-to-contact audiences (e.g., non-English speaking, functionally challenged, non-technical) been developed and field-tested?				
DELIVERY METHODS				
Adopt social media policies that provide guidance on who uses social media and how it is used, and distinguish which are used for an emergency and which are used for normal operations.				

Have organization accounts set up with sites, systems, and tools of choice (e.g., twitter, Facebook, blogs, podcasts, etc.)?				
Determine usage habits and accessibility of social media by regular and non-regular passengers and other stakeholders.				
Have multiple staff trained on how to use these systems (e.g., post updates, monitor feedback, etc.)?				
Determine what types of information will be updated through social media during a pandemic.				
Has a current contact list for local media been established and regularly updated?				
Has internal, or access to external, resources for social media?				

Appendix B: Transit Workforce Issues and FAQ Assembled by APTA

This section contains questions and answers relating to the COVID-19 pandemic from agencies across the US.

Question: ADA Compliant Video Conferencing

To stay connected to employees, business partners, board members, and others, what video conferencing services meet ADA standards and offer closed captioning?

Answer: Both Skype and Zoom offer closed captioning as a service.

Question: Temperature Checks for Operators, Employees

Does the CDC recommend temperature checks for operators and other transit workers who may have contact with riders and the public (such as bus operators) when they report to work?

Answer: We know of a few public transit agencies that are taking or planning to take employees' temperatures, including GCRTA in Cleveland (since it's now an Ohio requirement) and Sacramento RT. Other systems like LA Metro and Keolis are considering the practice, but have not implemented plans. Finally, still other transit agencies such as SEPTA in Philadelphia and King County Metro in Seattle have looked into the idea, but decided not to adopt the practice of checking employees' temperatures due to the resources that would be required and the risk of cross contamination.

A useful resource for this issue is the regional or local governmental health advisor and the CDC website at: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

Question: Operator Tests Positive

Are there established procedures that a public transit agency should follow if an operator tests positive for COVID-19? Obviously, the employee would be removed from duty, but what actions should be taken with regard to other employees who were in contact with the operator? Also, should the public be notified?

Answer: This is a new challenge, so many agencies may not have formal procedures. The transit agency should work closely with local health organizations and the CDC to monitor the individual and take precautions to ensure the safety of co-workers and customers. Any messages from the agency to employees or the public should be coordinated with local, regional, and governmental officials.

Question: Groups of 10 Employees

What guidance is available for groups of bus operators and other transit employees now that the federal government has recommended that no more than 10 people gather in one place? As federally-funded employees, does this recommendation apply to public transit employees?

Answer: The federal government's definition of mass gatherings does not include public transportation. However, some communities and states have discouraged or banned discretionary, non-essential travel. Public transit agencies have seen a decline in ridership as more people stay at home and telecommute. While federal officials recommend that people not gather in groups larger than 10, each transit system will have to determine what is best for its operations and the health and safety of its employees. Below is the CDC link pertaining to mass gatherings.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/mass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html

Question: Paid Sick Leave

Are public transit agencies required to provide paid sick leave as a result of the coronavirus?

Answer: The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which President Trump signed into law in March 2020, expands the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and creates the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act. Beginning April 2, 2020, both laws apply to all employers with fewer than 500 employees in the following ways:

1) Under the expanded FMLA for coronavirus absences, employees are entitled to two-thirds of their pay up to 12 weeks.

2) Under the Emergency Family Medical Leave Expansion Act, employees are entitled to paid, job-protected leave for coronavirus-related absences up to 80 hours for full-time employees and the average number of hours over a two-week period for part-time employees.

Question: Hazard Pay

Are some public transit agencies offering "hazard duty pay" increases for employees willing to work extra hours and serve the community through the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answer: According to transit CEOs, the issue of "hazard duty pay" has been raised by unions in some systems. We are not aware of any public transit agency that is currently providing that incentive and believe that this matter would be covered under collective bargaining agreements.

Transit Services

Question: Changes in FTA Regulations for Paratransit and Essential Services

Has or will the FTA relax regulations that:

1) Require complementary paratransit service hours to mirror fixed-route service in light of the severe drop in paratransit ridership?
2) Pertain to trip purpose so as to be consistent with "only essential services" as recommended by some local and state governments?

Answer: FTA is working on additional FAQs, including service equity analysis requirements (Title VI) and trip purpose restrictions (ADA). APTA hosted a webinar on Thursday March 19 titled "Paratransit Operations Response Plan to Coronavirus COVID-19." It can be accessed on www.APTA.com starting on March 26.

Question: Reducing Paratransit / Demand Response

Are public transit systems allowed to reduce or eliminate their paratransit / demand response services or set trip purpose requirements?

Answer: Yes, as long as the transit system treats riders with disabilities in the same manner as other riders. According to FTA's ADA Circular, "the regulations do not prohibit the use of waiting lists or trip caps, as long as riders with disabilities are not waitlisted more often or do not have more restrictive trip cap limitations … [and the] regulations do not prohibit demand responsive services from having poor rates of on-time performance or having long ride times due to limited service capacity, as long as riders with disabilities do not experience lower on-time performance rates or longer ride times than other riders." Given this, capacity constraints that apply to all riders are allowed, which includes reducing or eliminating services or having trip purpose requirements.

Question: Service Equity Analysis

If a public transit agency reduced or eliminates service, is the agency required to conduct a service equity analysis?

Answer: No. Temporary cuts in service in times of an emergency do not require a service equity analysis. For details , please see FTA's Emergency Relief Program page: https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grant-programs/emergency-relief-program

Question: Limiting or Reducing Service to Ill Riders and High Risk Routes

Should public transit agencies and their operators refuse service to riders who appear to be ill and show signs of coronavirus symptoms? Also, is there guidance on reducing transit operations on potential high risk routes (such as "Spring Break" routes) or high risk services (such as ride-share taxis) that service a high percentage of older riders?

Answer: For the safety of employees and passengers, many transit agencies have advised customers not to use public transportation if they are showing signs of illness. Customers who are ill should contact a healthcare provider and make transportation arrangements that do not involve public transit. APTA plans to host a webinar on this subject soon.

Here are links to: 1) APTA Recommended Practice for making decisions to shut down or reduce transit service (https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/Standards_Documents/APTA-SS-SEM-S-005-09.pdf); and 2) FTA's Frequently Asked Questions that address this issue (https://www.transit.dot.gov/frequently-asked-questions-fta-grantees-regarding-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19).

Question: Transit Service for Non-Medical Healthcare Support Workers

The health care industry (including hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, surgery centers, etc.) rely on workers who are not medical professionals. This includes the support staff who prepare food and wash linens. Are these frontline workers allowed to use public transportation by virtue of the essential services they provide to the healthcare profession?

Answer: The non-medical work to support health care facilities and professionals is absolutely essential. For many workers, access to public transportation is a necessity to get to their place of work. For this reason, transit systems across the country are doing everything they can to continue providing a level of service to meet community needs while protecting the health and safety of riders and employees.

Question: Transit System Shutdowns

Have there been any public transit system shutdowns or reduced service? Have some systems closed their buildings to the public?

Answer: At present, Green Bay Metro is the only agency that temporarily suspended all service; however the system is operating again. Some agencies in areas such as Washington, DC, the Detroit suburbs, and Las Vegas have reduced service. We know other agencies are considering service cutbacks, in part due to a limited number of available operators as some employees choose to remain at home. Additionally, some transit agencies have closed their buildings to employees and the public, including in Olympia, WA and Charlotte, NC.

Question: Tracking Changes in Service Nationwide

Is APTA tracking which public transit agencies have suspended or reduced service?

Answer: As our members alert us to changes in their service or when the local media reports on such changes, we keep track of how the coronavirus is impacting public transportation in different communities.

Transit Operations

Question: Screening Riders

Is it appropriate to screen riders over the telephone or in person for COVID-19 symptoms and, if a rider appears to have the coronavirus, should the public transit agency refuse to provide service to the individual(s)?

Answer: It is not advisable or effective to ask transit agency employees to screen for COVID-19 over the telephone. Also, just because someone is observed coughing, sneezing, or otherwise looks ill, does not mean the person has COVID-19. If an untrained, non-healthcare employee denies service to a rider, it could pose litigation risks for the transit agency.

The local health department can suggest other options. For example, if there is an objective and reasonable cause to suspect a person may have COVID-19, a transit employee might ask if the person has been tested and/or has a doctor's note.

If a person acknowledges having tested positive for the coronavirus, access to public transit service can be denied due to the fact that the individual poses a direct threat to the health and safety of the driver and other riders.

Question: Rear-Door Boarding

We are developing a rear-door boarding strategy to reduce the risk of drivers interacting with customers. Are there any recent policies that would offer guidance, particularly for a hybrid approach; e.g. passes, monthly passes, and transfers from the back door, and cash, tickets, and accessible at the front door?

Answer: Several public transit agencies, including Sunline and Maryland MTA, have implemented or are considering rear door boarding to reduce contact between the operator and riders. Some agencies are also removing fare enforcement for the same reason since the fare machines are typically only at the front door Most seem to be eliminating payments that require more than a tap on the farebox. Please check APTA's coronavirus resource page at www.APTA.com for more information from other transit agencies, government officials, and health care professionals.

APTA Events & Activities

Question: APTA Operations

Is APTA open and operating during the pandemic?

Answer: APTA is continuing to serve its members by using tele-work and online services. Our office in Washington, DC, like most places of business, is closed based on the recommendations of the CDC, however incoming telephone calls are being routed to the appropriate APTA employee. We are available by telephone and email, we update www.APTA.com and our social media site every day, and we are continuing to work with our members, partners, federal and state government agencies, elected officials, and the media.

Question: Bus Roadeo and Rail Rodeo

Have the International Bus Roadeo in May and International Rail Rodeo in June been cancelled or postponed?

Answer: After consulting with the host agencies for these events and with APTA's leaders, we determined that it would not be possible to hold the International Bus Roadeo or the Rail Rodeo, as well as the accompanying Mobility and Rail Conferences. As you can imagine, these events require significant on-site preparations many weeks in advance. At a time when transit agencies, businesses, and communities are dealing with the challenges posed by the coronavirus, it is impossible to prepare for major events. Nonetheless, APTA is exploring other ways to provide our members with the content that would have been presented the Mobility and Rail Conferences. These include virtual, online events and expanding the TRANSform Conference and EXPO in October. More details will be available in the coming weeks.

Question: Other APTA Events

What is the status of other APTA events, such as workshops and committee meetings?

Answer: We are continuously monitoring the pandemic's impact on our members, partners, presenters, and sponsors. We are also staying abreast of the policies and practices of the cities where we plan to host events. If any future APTA events need to be cancelled, postponed, and transformed into virtual meetings, we will provide the information with as much advance notice as possible.

Disinfectants

Question: Are there EPA-registered disinfectants for use against SARS-CoV-2?

Answer: Yes, the EPA published List N which includes disinfectants that have qualified under EPA's emerging viral pathogen program for use against SARS-CoV-2, a coronavirus that causes COVID-19. List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2.

Question: Do I need to disinfect porous surfaces such as cloth seats?

Answer: The CDC provides that information in recommendations for the workplace.

Question: How do I know if the disinfectant I'm using kills COVID-19 (coronavirus)?

Answer: Refer to the EPA Registration Number (EPA Reg. No.), found on the product label, not the brand name. When purchasing a product for use against a specific pathogen, check the EPA Reg. No. for example EPA Reg. No. 12345-12.

Question: If a disinfectant is labeled for coronavirus but not specifically COVID-19 will it work on COVID-19?

Answer: Refer to this link from EPA which states, Coronaviruses are enveloped viruses, meaning they are one of the easiest types of viruses to kill with the appropriate disinfectant product. EPA strongly recommends following the product label use directions for enveloped viruses, as indicated by the approved emerging viral pathogen claim on the master label. If the directions for use for viruses/viricidal activity list different contact times or dilutions, use the longest contact time or most concentrated solution.

Question: What electrostatic disinfectant spray is being used?

Answer: Husky 814 Q/T Tuberculocidal Spray Disinfectant cleaner is being used by Champaign-Urbana Transit.